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# Newsmen are Americans first

As far as we are concerned, U.S. newsmen are Americans, like everyone else.

Thus, we part company with the American Society of Newspaper Editors, who have written a letter to President Carter, expressing concern over the President's position on the use of American journalists by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The letter referred specifically to remarks made by Admiral Stansfield Turner, the director of Central Intelligence, when he addressed the organization's convention in Washington on April 10, a convention at which *The Times Publishing Company* was represented. Turner told the editors that he would not hesitate to recruit journalists as agents in given situations if he felt that it was in the national interest to do so. The president said later that he supported the director's position.

The key distinction -- and the only cause for concern on the part of journal-

ists, it seems to us -- is on a possible "paid relationship." We do not think journalists should be on the CIA payroll. But if President Carter or Admiral Turner or anybody in the CIA thinks a

## VIEWPOINT

returning journalist has information on a foreign country that could be of use to his or her country, why, then, we think the journalist has to remember he or she is an American first.

The distinction on whether the journalist is paid or not was the basis of a 1976 dispute. At that time George Bush was director of the CIA and he announced -- quite properly, in our opinion -- that the agency would no longer enter into paid relationships with part-time or full-time news correspondents accredited by any American news organization.

Bush's stance then is the one that

should be followed by President Carter and Admiral Turner today. As for the newsmen involved, we think, by and large, American newspaper people are as patriotic as anyone. Individual journalists know where their responsibilities lie.